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ABSTRACT

This teaching unit describes an elective reading course for high school students incorporating the goals and methods of writing across the curriculum. Students choose the books they want to read and read in class at least two days each week, and write a brief journal entry at the end of the class period. Students also have the option of writing a letter to fellow students giving their opinion of the book. Course objectives, lesson plans, procedures, evaluation, and a list of teacher-developed material is included. Forms for recording daily work, individual reading goals, and instructions for writing the journals are attached. (RS)

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WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM APPLIED TO INDIVIDUALIZED READING

Grades 9 - 12

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WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

INDIVIDUALIZED READING

GOALS:

This is a diagnostic-prescriptive reading course offered as an elective to all students in grades 9-12. These students are required to read books of their own choosing two days per week. I have deliberately tried to distinguish this kind of reading from the "reading-to-make-a-book-report" kind of reading that is done in most English classes. These books can range from young adult novels to philosophy, even including instructions on how to customize a car. The only reporting required has been an entry in the Teacher's Logbook in which the student gives starting date, title, author, stopping date, number of pages, and a statement that he/she did or did not finish the book. I wanted to increase the benefit to the student from his/her reading. Believing that one often learns by writing, I decided to incorporate writing into this course, to accommodate that writing to the individuality of the students, and to adapt it to the variety of books which these students read. Consequently, I have added to the course activities a required journal entry in the last ten minutes of each book-reading class session and an opportunity for extra credit for the student who will write a letter to other students in the reading classes giving an opinion regarding the book he/she has read.

OBJECTIVES:

The student will

1. benefit more from the reading of the book he/she has chosen than he/she may have previously done.
2. anticipate outcomes in narratives.
3. identify with characters in both fiction and biography.
4. support a subjective opinion regarding a book or a specific idea in a book with references to the text, his own experience, or previous reading.
5. use his/her imagination to explore the idea of "What if---."
6. express an emotional response to what has been read.
7. state what he/she has learned from the reading.
8. state a problem encountered in the reading.
9. state how the reading has confirmed or changed his/her beliefs.
10. summarize what was read.
11. distinguish elements of time and place in a narrative.
12. determine cause and effect

LESSON PLAN:

STAFF: One teacher

EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

1. File folder for each student (10¢ per student)
2. Supply of notebook paper for journals and letters so that lack of paper is not an excuse for not doing the activity (6-10 sheets per student)
3. Supply of pens or pencils for any who may have come to class without one (These are to be returned after the writing task. $2.00)
4. Storage boxes in which the folders are kept when the students are not in class (Cardboard storage boxes cost $5.00 each. I needed two for 4 classes each semester.)
5. A notebook in which to keep the opinion letters ($3.50)
6. A notebook for the Teacher's Logbook ($3.50)

PROCEDURE:

1. Each student is given his/her folder which has been stored in the reading lab. This folder contains the student's daily schedule, all worksheets done in skills activities, the journal entries, a daily work record stating what activity he/she has done each day, and a record sheet for recording specific information for the days he/she read a book in class. That information includes date, title, author, number of pages read that day, and time spent reading.
2. All students work on the assigned task for that day as indicated on the schedule in the folder. Those who are scheduled to read a book will read the books they have chosen to read. These books may be secured from library, home, or reading lab.
3. Ten minutes before the end of the period the teacher will state that each student who has been reading a book that period should now begin writing a journal entry using any one of the ideas on the suggestion sheet which they all have in their folders or some other idea which may have occurred to him/her during the reading session. This journal entry is added to those already in the folder. At the end of the period the folders are returned to the teacher and stored until the next class session.
4. Any student who finished a book that period and entered that information in the Teacher's Logbook is asked if he/she is willing to write an opinion letter to the other students in the reading classes making sure that he/she gives reasons for that opinion. These opinions are then placed in a notebook called "Opinions about Books," and this notebook is kept beside the Teacher's Logbook where it is available to all other students who want to find out another student's opinion about the book he is planning to read. A student might also look through this notebook to find out what books other students have liked so that he/she can decide what book to read next.

EVALUATION:

I periodically take the folders home and read the journals. I do not check them for errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics. I simply respond to their ideas and write comments or questions wherever they are appropriate making sure that these are always positive and, whenever possible, stimulating to further thinking or reading. The students are given credit for writing these journal entries and are encouraged to write ten lines if possible. They are given extra credit if they write longer entries as long as they are really saying something additional and not just repeating words or sentences as one might do when using up a designated amount of time in a "Free Writing" activity.

Students who write opinion letters are also given extra credit.

TEACHER-DEVELOPED MATERIALS:

1. Reading Goals and Weekly Schedule
2. Daily Work Record
3. Record of Independent Reading of Books
4. Reading Record (This is the sheet for the Teacher's Logbook.)
5. Journals (This is a page of prompts for journal entries.)

READING GOALS AND WEEKLY SCHEDULE

NAME _____ SEMESTER ____ YEAR ____ PERIOD ____ GRADE ___

GOAL I * BOOK READING

I will read the following number of pages in books which I may select or the equivalent in magazine articles. (Be sure to notify the teacher when you begin reading a book or magazine, and then notify her when you stop.)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Target dates								
Page Goal								
Pages Read								

GOAL II * SKILL BUILDING

Target Date _____ Goal_____
Evaluation _____

Target Date _____ Goal_____
Evaluation _____

Target Date _____ Goal_____
Evaluation _____

Target Date _____ Goal_____
Evaluation _____

The schedule below is planned to assist you in accomplishing the above goals. Follow this schedule unless it is changed by the teachers.

Activity	Reason for Change	Activity	Reason fo Change
MONDAY			
TUESDAY			
WEDNESDAY			
THURSDAY			

FRIDAY - This is not a Free Day but is a day of choices. Choose one of the following:

1. Free Reading 2. Word games (Probe, Scrabble, etc.)
3. Crossword puzzle, word finds, etc. 4. Make-up work for an excused absence from class.

DAILY WORK RECORD

«ECTIONS: Every day you must write the date and name the activity or activities on which you worked that day. If you read a book or magazine, you must also fill in the required information on the proper record sheets for books and magazines. Whan you return from an absence, fill in the date or dates that you were absent and write the word ABSENT in the activity column.

DATE	ACTIVITY	DATE	ACTIVITY

RECORD OF INDEPENDENT READING OF BOOKS

NAME _____ SEMESTER ___ YEAR ____

DATE	TITLE OF BOOK	AUTHOR	HOW MANY PAGES DID YOU READ TODAY?	READING TIME

READING RECORD

STARTING-DATE	TITLE	AUTHOR	STOPPING DATE	PAGES	FINISHED

YEAR_____ SEMESTER ___ NAME_____

RAT SPELLING TEST	DATE	SCORE	GRADE LEVEL	%ILE	S.S.	GROUPING

PIAT -
READING RECOGNITION

LOSS -						
GAIN -						
READING COMPREHENSION						
LOSS -						
GAIN -						

SRA III

'LENT READING TEST	DATE	COLOR	NO.	WPM	COMP. %	E.I.

ESTES ATTITUDE SCALE	DATE	SCORE	RATING- POOR	FAIR	GOOD	VERY GOOD	EXC.

COMMENTS:_____

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE work----------

JOURNALS

On the days that you are scheduled to read your book, you should stop reading ten minutes before the end of class and do these 3 things:

1. Fill in the required information on the sheet for "Independent Reading of Books."
2. Fill in the "Daily Work Record."
3. In your journal write the date and then try to write at least 10 lines in your journal using one of the following ideas: (Where I have a blank, don't just fill in the blank but continue writing as much as you can on that idea.)

What I read today reminds me of _____.

What I read today makes me feel _____.

After my reading today I think _____.

After my reading today, I want to _____.

The character in my book named _____ is _____.

If I were _____ I would _____.
(character in book)

What do you think is going to happen next?

Pick one character from your book. Tell me what that character might have been thinking in the section of the book you read today.

Tell me the ways in which you and one of the characters in your book are alike and/or different.

Does any part of this story confuse you? (Is there something you don't understand?) Tell me about it.

In the part of the book you read today, why did things happen the way they did?

Would you or would you not like to live in the place where the characters in your story live? Why or why not?

Would you or would you not like to live in the day and time in which your story characters are living? Why or why not?